

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace current paragraph [0008] beginning at page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph [0008]:

[0008] The first step is the compounding or combining of a thermoplastic material **12**, such as a high-density polyethylene (HDPE), with amorphous silica **14** to form a compound. The thermoplastic **12** is in the form of granules and the amorphous silica **14** is in the form of a powder. Rice Chemistry Corporation sells the amorphous silica **14** under the trademark RICE/SIL-100 in a "powder-like" form. The amorphous silica **14** may be combined with the thermoplastic **12** to form the compound by any one of several different methods including "filling" the thermoplastic **12** with amorphous silica **14** during the fabrication of the monomer or polymer resin or combining the amorphous silica **14** with the resin after its manufacture. In the latter case the thermoplastic **12** in its commonly supplied pelletized form would be heated until it reached a viscous state and the amorphous silica **14** would be combined (mixed) with the viscous thermoplastic to form a viscous compound. This mixing process could take place in the "barrel" of a molding machine and the compound injected directly into a mold for the manufacture of a fuel tank or the mixing process could take place in another mixing device and the compound would be further processed to a useable form. In the latter case the compound may be processed through an extruder, solidified and pelletized for example. The compounding may be accomplished in any suitable mixing apparatus such as an extruder **16**. The compound is heated into a viscous state in the extruder **16**. Actually, the thermoplastic **12** is heated by a heater **18** to a viscous state and the powdered amorphous silica **14** is added

to form a heated and viscous compound which is then extruded from the extruder **16**
to form a strand **20**. As is well known, the strand is cooled into a solid that is
subsequently chopped or cut into pellets **22**.